

FLIGHT 1

HAWAIIAN HILLTOP

BY GENEVIEVE TAGGARD



WYCKOFF & GELBER, SAN FRANCISCO

THE ROBERT GRABHORN
COLLECTION



THE HISTORY
OF
PRINTING



THE DEVELOPMENT
OF THE BOOK



SAN FRANCISCO
PUBLIC LIBRARY



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2019 with funding from
San Francisco Public Library

<https://archive.org/details/hawaiianhilltop00gene>

❧[FLIGHT ONE]❧

HAWAIIAN HILLTOP

By GENEVIEVE TAGGARD

San Francisco:

WYCKOFF & GELBER

1923

Copyright 1923 by Genevieve Taggard

To
James and Alta Taggard
who took me there



These poems have been published in:

Harper's

The Conning Tower of the New York
Tribune

The Bowling Green of the New York
Evening Post

The Lyric West

The Measure, A Journal of Poetry

The Liberator

Voices, A Journal of Verse

CONTENTS

Hawaiian Hilltop	I
Bronze Boy	2
Tropic Mother's Melody	2
Kanaka Mother-Goose	3
Native Daphne	3
Phantoms at Tea	4
Dying Away Song	4
Portygee Love-Song	5
Hallucination	5
Solar Myth	6
Skull Song	9
Kona Storm	10
Kona Rain	10
To a Brown Face	11
Tail-Piece for a Romance	11
Child Tropics	12
The Tourist	15

HAWAIIAN HILLTOP

In Greece the shadows slept as still,
In Rome, the hills were arched as high—
Their wind now blows my hair, and will
Stir other maidens' when I die.

And leaves that print the dust with lines,
And pebbles rubbed and rounded blue,
And burrs like baby porcupines
Looked this way when the Nile was new.

And dust, to Babylonian feet
Was downy soft, and good to tread.
The bees that mumble in this heat
Made the same honey for their bread.

Both early with the sun and late
Crept the same shades and flew the same
White flags of clouds across the straight
Horizon of another name.

Men chipped us messages in stone,
The careful stories of their kings—
But they were dumb about their own
Undying things!

BRONZE BOY

To this deep pool with blowing torches came
Your fathers, lithe as flame,
Trailing their nets and poisoning their slim spears
Over this pool, a hundred years.

Up from the pool the dim white fishes came
After the flame,
To touch the fluid fire plunging down
Into this pool where all but fishes drown.

Above your pool we lie, on your worn stone,
And you are known
By these dim fishes, that will dart and glide
When you and your flame-bodied race have died.

TROPIC MOTHER'S MELODY

Coco-palm, bend double and tickle my baby,
Shark in the pool, splash your tail!
Spread for him, peacock,
Swing for him, banyan,
For my brown little baby boy.

Tattoo him sun, with patterns of passion-vine,
Big, black beetle, leave him be!
Circle red flamingoes!
White flamingoes, fly
For my brown little baby boy.

KANAKA MOTHER-GOOSE

The sea is a dress for your nakedness,
A loin-cloth blue and green,
With fishes for embroidery—
The tiny ones, I mean.

NATIVE DAPHNE

If you would love a maiden for her eyes,
Go to the silver shy kukui tree,
A maiden fair forever in disguise
Lest men should spoil her of her chastity:
(Men come as friends but go as guilty thieves).
For your hot forehead gather her cool leaves—
Sit in her lap, and listen as she stirs
Green meditations that alone are hers.
And for you few who love a woman's soul
Kukui oil will make an aureole.

PHANTOMS AT TEA

Into your tea, one petal,
Into my pages, two;
Above us a lattice of cherries
Embroidered on the blue

Around us the runnel of water,
Above us the shiver of shade,
As petal, by petal, by petal
The cherry phantoms fade.

DYING AWAY SONG

Mood in a strange country of four seasons.

I left you fields, forlorn—
I found you dying;
Saw grasses torn,
Heard crying.

Leaves in frailty lifted,
Now are fallen;
Even your dust is sifted
With old pollen.

Autumn, autumn, follows
Where I go:
After me, swallows,
Then snow.

PORTYGEE LOVE-SONG

The Portuguese were one of fifteen successive nationalities imported into the Islands to do sugar-planting.

Dolores Lane was where she lived
Before she lived with me,
And when she left Dolores Lane
There was no one to see;
She left it in the bitter rain
To come and live with me.

Within my house is firelight,
Without, is bitter rain.
She does not love the firelight,—
Against the window-pane
She leans and looks and longs, to-night,
For dull Dolores Lane.

HALLUCINATION

What was it flew over me there,
Over me lightly?
Darted and left me to stare
After it whitely?

Mists of the long, low moon,
Wraiths of the meadow,
Dune, after dune, after dune,
You saw its shadow.

Was it a dream I had,
Forgotten quite,
Come back to make me sad,
Ashamed, and white?

SOLAR MYTH

Maui, the dutiful son and great hero, yields to his mother's entreaty and adjusts the center of the universe to her convenience. The days are too short for drying tapa. He is persuaded to slow down the speed of the spider-sun with a lasso of sisal rope.

The golden spider of the sky
Leaped from the crater's rim;
And all the winds of morning rose
And spread, and followed him.

The circle of the day swept out,
His vast and splendid path;
The purple sea spumed in the west
His humid evening bath.

Thrice twenty mighty legs he had,
And over earth there passed
Shadows daily whipping by,
Faster, faster, fast. . . .

For daily did he wax more swift,
And daily did he run
The span of heaven to the sea,
A lusty, rebel sun.

Then Maui's mother came to him
With weight of household woes:
"I cannot get my tapa dry
Before the daylight goes.

“Morning I rise and spread with care
My tapa on the grass;
Evening I gather it again,
A damp and sodden mass.”

Then Maui rose and climbed at night
The mountain. Dim and deep
Within the crater's bowl he saw
The sprawling sun asleep.

He looped his ropes, the mighty man,
He whirled his sisal cords;
They whistled like a hurricane,
And cut the air like swords.

Up sprang the spider. Maui hurled
His lasso after him.
The spider fled. Great Maui stood
Firm on the mountain-rim.

The spider dipped and swerved and pulled,
But struggle as he might,
Around one-half his whirl of legs
The sisal ropes cut tight.

He broke them off, the mighty man,
He dropped them in the sea.
Where there had once been sixty legs
There now were thirty-three.

Maui counted them, and took
The pathway home ; and came
Back to his mother, brooding,— strode
Like a lost man, and lame.

The tarnished spider of the sky
Limped slowly over heaven,
And with his going mourned and moaned
The missing twenty-seven.

On with a hollow voice he mourned,
Poured out his hollow woe ;
Over, each day the sound of him
Bellowing, went below.

Maui saw the gulls swarm up
And scream and settle on
The carcass of the limping thing
That once had been the sun.

But still he thought at length to have
His mother satisfied.

“Can’t you put back his legs again
Now all my tapa ’s dried?”

“The days are long and dull,” she said.
“I loved to see them skim.”
Wearily the old sun shook
The black birds off of him.

SKULL SONG

A sea-god, whose father had been a mortal, becomes a skeleton.

The skin of the sea was thick, to-night,
And the tone of the sea was dull;
When I found by the edge of the sullen sea
The half of a sea-god's skull.

Half of a sea-god's skull was there,
Half of a sea-god's tail.
When I dug them out of the clutch of the sand
The peering moon went pale.

The peering moon went pale, because
Her other eye had seen
The other half of the sea-god's bones
Ten thousand fathom green

Ten thousand fathom green with sea,
The sea-god's other bones
Swayed in a dead sea-goddess's arms
On a pile of sea-washed stones.

The skin of the sea was thick, to-night,
And the tone of the sea was dull,
While I buried away from the sinister sea
All the mortal part of a skull.

KONA STORM

Thunder and booming down within the womb
Of hollow earth, that grows and dims and dies;
Apart the stars are rushing; the night skies
Are flecked with white and drenched in foam and spum
The lawn is strewn with briars. In the flume
I hear the crashing cane, and there are cries
Of wounded birds that fall to earth and rise
One-winged; and tall black palms thresh in the gloom.

Oh, Tempest, take me in Thy bold embrace!
More lover, Thou, than men whose voices fret
Against their ills. In storm, wind round me wet
White arms—my sad confused sense erase:
I know not mankind, nor know Thee, and yet
More love Thy majesty than any face.

KONA RAIN

The rice is blowing, winnowed with the rain,
Across our pond, the broken rushes drift;
Beyond the fields, the tree's a scarlet stain
Where we were yesterday. Your hands are swift—
(Oh—dear, your hands are swift . . .)
To turn my face from this wet window pane;
Across our pond, the broken rushes drift—
The rice is blowing, winnowed with the rain.

TO A BROWN FACE

We two have known an Island and a Sea
That keep us ever foreign to this shore:
For you, the sun; in my dull ears, the roar
Of that surrounding ocean haunting me.
We dream, and still are dumb, unwillingly
To that far kingdom subject. Long before
I knew your name, your very presence bore
A portion of its warm serenity.

Once, when we sat at tea, among the rest,
Come from the foggy hills, I saw your eyes
Stare at the fire, and with grave surprise
Knew on your lonely face, my own heart's quest.

To that far land the wind forever flies,
And all the waves of earth move to the west.

TAIL-PIECE FOR A ROMANCE

On stones my heart has fallen,
On stones, on stones it lies,
Away from the people passing
With their curious eyes.

On stones my heart has fallen,
On flinty stones it bleeds
Between a stiff flower
And two weeds.

CHILD TROPICS

*Never now
Can any river cool me, never can
White silence ease me, nor the dew distilled
Even in ginger-flowers satisfy, unless . . .*

Out of abundance, in the lap of seas,
Wind-widened out to the pure line of skies
Grew an old hunger, and behind my eyes
Is always your lost crimson, your drunk bees,
On my lips your drouth,
And I am always reaching for the mouth
Of the honey nights I've seen wasted in the south. . .

And then how many days I followed down
The tangled river banks, beside
The cool, white-bellied fishes, there to hang
Above the rocky pools and brown
Cupped, velvet mosses where they slept; —
Often and often, crackling twigs I crept
Waking them, when over them there went
My timid shadow's leaning wonderment.

At night, sitting alone,
Out on the steps between my warped tree and the stone
Its roots encircled sundering, I learned
How the white stars burned.

Washing my feet in chilly water, counting bruises,
staring at the stars—

The uneven dipper and red-bearded Mars
Caught in my thorny tree,—

Oh, the hunger and wild sorrow in me!
Those nights, those honey nights, with the rich swoon
Of mango-flowers thick against the moon,
And drawn across the coral reefs, the sea
Flashing its foam-white flatness up to me!

Oh, no, this hunger is not new, not new,
But older, hotter than when I
Plunged in the fever marshes where there grew
The cool white ginger-buds, or when I flew
Down the small valley, desolate and scarred
Between the red volcano hills and hard
Harsh outlines of old trees that fed
On bitter soil until their sap was dead.

How like a fugitive our glad fulfillment goes
Over hills before us!—leaving only
Earth's abundance in ruins, earth that grows
Fruit for her children they can never eat,
Food for the starved to see and honey-sweet
Clusters of grapes dropping with the noon heat.

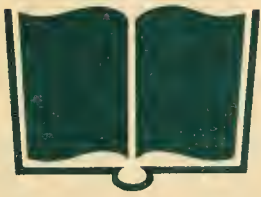
Never, now,
Can any river cool me, never can
White silence ease me, nor the dew distilled
Even in ginger-flowers satisfy, unless
This old quick thirst, this aching aridness,
That urged us once, turn keen torment again
With beauty's wind a knife along the clear
Hot hills, unless we hear
Her tiny plaint in every teeming rain,
Unless her pollen comes
Honey on our senses, and her drums
Beat in our wrists, until we turn as then
To find each other radiant in her pain.

THE TOURIST

He saw the hula flower in her hair
Drop to her bosom where it rose and fell:
Forgotten was her lover; slow her stare
Felt for his eyes; her warm body's smell—
The yellow-stamen perfume on her breath,
The poison heavy sleepiness of death
Made all her figure's slender golden grace
Seem like a censer in an altared place.

Swinging she danced the hula, and the moon
Hung on the mountain honeying the night:
Her dress of flowers whirled about her—strewn
Along the grass the fire-petals died.
Then like a bat against that disc of light
Leaped up her lover, and the lonely wide
Hollow and shadow echoed as he cried.

500 copies "Hawaiian Hilltop"
Printed at the Grabhorn Press : San Francisco
November, 1923



SAN FRANCISCO
PUBLIC LIBRARY

*Gift of
Mrs. Walter A. Haas*

REFERENCE BOOK

Not to be taken from the Library

GP #57

